

La Bamba

Hundreds of years before it hit the Top 40 with Los Lobos, “La Bamba” was being sung and played in the Mexican Gulf part of Veracruz. The music reflects Caribbean and African influences and the lyrics mention aspects of Veracruz; colorful history as Mexico’s principal port of entry and of invasion.

“La Bamba” is a folk song whose origins can be traced to the Mexican state of Veracruz over 300 years ago. It is best known from a 1958 adaptation by Ritchie Valens, a top 40 hit in the the U.S. charts and one of early rock and roll’s best-known songs.

The traditional song inspired Ritchie Valens’ rock and roll version “La Bamba” in the 1950s. Valens’ “La Bamba” infused the traditional tune with a rock beat, making the song accessible to the population of the United States and earning it (and Valens) a place in rock history. The song features simple verse-chorus form. Valens learned the Spanish lyrics phonetically, as he had been raised from birth speaking English. Valens’ version of La Bamba is ranked number 345 on Rolling Stone magazine’s list of the 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. It is the only song on the list not sung in English. Ritchie Valens’ tapping into a Mexican folk song unwittingly paved the way for Twist and Shout and all the other songs based on it since 1962.

(Ritchie Valens version)

_____ bailar la _____,
Para _____ la bamba,
Se _____ una poca de gracia.
Una _____ de gracia para ____ para ti.
_____ y arriba
Y arriba y arriba, _____ ti seré,
Por ti seré.
Por ____ seré.

Yo _____ marinero
Yo no soy marinero, soy _____
Soy capitán, _____ capitán

_____, bamba, bamba, bamba
Bamba, bamba

Poca	Para
Bamba	mi
Bailar	seré
Necesita	capitán
Por	no soy
Ti	arriba

Bamba

**Para bailar la bamba,
Para bailar la bamba,
Se necesita una poca de gracia.
Una poca de gracia para mi para ti.
Arriba, arriba.**

(guitar solo)

**Para bailar la bamba,
Para bailar la bamba,
Se necesita una poca de gracia.
Una poca de gracia para mi para ti.
Arriba y arriba
Y arriba y arriba, por ti seré,
Por ti seré.
Por ti seré.**

**Bamba, bamba, bamba, bamba
Bamba, bamba
Bamba, bamba**